

Message Text

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11

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-08 IO-04 ISO-00 SAB-01 SAM-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-05 L-01 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 DRC-01 /068 W

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R 180645Z OCT 74

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 820

INFO USINT ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

USMISSION GENEVA

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 12502

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

LONDON FOR LAMBRAKIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PLO XF UNGA

SUBJECT: LOCAL FEDAYEEN REACTION TO UNGA'S INVITATION TO PLO

A. BEIRUT 12422 (NOTAL); B. BEIRUT 12423 (NOTAL)

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SUMMARY: BASED ON OUR OBSERVATION OF FEDAYEEN REACTION HERE, THERE EXISTS REAL DANGER THAT PLO AND ITS ARAB SYMPATHIZERS MAY BE TEMPTED CAPITALIZE ON THEIR OCT. 14 "VICTORY" IN UNGA BY SEEKING ENDORSEMENT OF MAXIMILIST FEDAYEEN GOALS IN UPCOMING PLEANARY DEBATE. ALTHOUGH SUCH BEHAVIOR MIGHT PERHAPS DISMAY 'ARAFAT AND MANY OF HIS SO-CALLED "MODERATE FOLLOWERS"--NOT TO MENTION MORE MODERATE ARAB GOVTS.--IT WOULD CERTAINLY NOT RPT NOT BE HELPFUL TO FUTURE ME SETTLEMENT EFFORTS. END SUMMARY

1. AS MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPECTED, FEDAYEEN SPOKESMEN AND CIRCLES HERE ARE WIDELY TOUTING OCT. 14 PLO "VICTORY" AT UNGA AS EVENT OF HISTORIC IMPORTANCE" (REFTELS). THERE IS LITTLE IN THEIR STATEMENTS TO SUGGEST THEY ARE ABLE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN PROPAGANDA SUCCESS AND SUBSTANTIVE POLITICAL-DIPLOMATIC ACHIEVEMENTS IN FURTHERING "MODERATE" PALESTINIAN OBJECTIVES. THERE IS VIRTUALLY NO INCLINATION ON THEIR PART TO (A) QUESTION WHETHER SAME DEGREE OF OVERWHELMING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT WILL BE FORTHCOMING FOR WHATEVER PLO SPOKESMEN WILL HAVE TO SAY DURING UPCOMING GA DEBATE, OR (B) ASK WHAT REAL WEIGHT THOSE STATES WHICH VOTED IN FAVOR OF GA INVITATION TO PLO CAN HAVE IN DETERMINING FUTURE OF PALESTINIAN CAUSE.

2. FOREMOST AMONG CONCLUSIONS DRAWN BY PALESTINIANS HERE RE SIGNIFICANCE OF OCT. 14 VOTE IS PLO OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN'S ASSERTION (PARA 4 REFTEL B) THAT SC RES 242 HAS NOW BEEN "ANNULLED". SUCH INTERPRETATION OBVIOUSLY BASED ON FACILE ASSUMPTION THAT INTERNATIONAL OPINION CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONTINUE ACCORD OVERWHELMING AND UNQUESTIONING SUPPORT TO MAXIMUM PALESTINIAN OBJECTIVES AND THUS ENSURE THEIR ACHIEVEMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, MANY PALESTINIANS HERE (INCLUDING SOME WHO SHOULD KNOW BETTER), HAVE ALREADY BEGUN TO TALK ABUSRDLY ABOUT EXPELLING ISRAEL FROM UN.

3. IT BY NO MEANS CLEAR THAT PLO AND FATAH "MODERATES" WILL BE PERSUADED BY ALL THIS EUPHORIA TO "GO FOR BROKE" AT UNGA, BUT WE BELIEVE THAT POSSIBILITY CERTAINLY EXISTS. IT MAY BE THAT DESPITE CURRENT "VICTORY" HULLABALOO, SUCH COOLER HEADS AND SOFTER VOICES AS MAY EXIST WITHIN PLO AND AMONG INFLUENTIAL BUT MODERATE ARAB STATES MAY PREVAIL IN COUNSELLING PRACTICALITY AND COMMON SENSE, BUT DEEPLY-ROOTED PALESTIANIAN RESENTMENT
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AT HAVING TO CONTINUE UNDER SUCH ARAB "TUTELAGE" COULD RESULT IN THEIR ADVICE GOING UNHEEDED. IN FACT, WE BELIEVE THAT GENERAL PALESTINIAN EUPHORIA OVER RECENT UNGA VOTE MAY EVEN HAVE INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR FRICTION BETWEEN KEY MODERATE ARAB STATES THAT LATTER, SHOULD THEY TRY APPLY BRAKES IN ORDER FORCE PLO TO KEEP IN STEP ON ARAB DIPLOMATIC FRONT, MAY FIND THEMSELVES FACED WITH MESSY SITUATION AT UPCOMING ARAB SUMMIT IN RABAT.

4. IN ANY EVENT, SEEMS CLEAR THAT BULK OF FEDAYEEN ACTIVISTS AND THEIR LOCAL SYMPATHIZERS NOW CONFIDENTLY EXPECT PLO TO APPROACH FORTHCOMING UNGA DEBATE AS "VICTORS, RATHER THAN SUPPLICANTS. THERE ALREADY IS MUCH TALK ABOUT 'ARAFAT BEING GIVEN "HERO'S WELCOME" AT UN SHOULD HE DECIDE SHOW UP FOR PLENARY DEBATE IN NOVEMBER. ALL THIS MAY TURN OUT TO BE SIMPLY A TEMPORARY "EGO-TRIP" FOR EMOTION-RIDDEN PALESTINIANS, BUT IT CAN ALSO PROVE STUMBLING-BLOCK TO 'ARAFAT'S LONG-STANDING HOPES OF GAINING MORE SIGNIFICANT AND "POSITIVE" ROLE FOR PLO IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS AIMED AT PEACEFUL ME SETTLEMENT. NEXT FEW WEEKS SHOULD REVEAL WHETHER PLO "MODERATES" WILL ALLOW SELF-GENERATED PALESTINIAN ENTHUSIASM DESCRIBED ABOVE TO CLOUD THEIR BETTER JUDGMENT AND SENSE OF POLITICAL REALISM. GODLEY

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